

Amendments to the Claims:

1. (currently amended) A longwall support control for controlling the movements of a plurality of longwall support units in the longwall of a mine, comprising:

a central control system, and

a separate mining shield control device locally and operationally associated to each longwall support unit, the mining shield control devices being connected to the central control system and serially connected to one another by means of at least one bus line, through which each of the mining shield control devices can be called up from the central control system or an adjacent mining shield control device for inputting a control command, and with each mining shield control device being programmed such that it is possible to deliver for execution to its associated longwall support unit control commands that are received via the one bus line, and with each mining shield control device storing a code word uniquely associated with the respectively called up mining shield control device, and with each mining shield control device being programmed to execute a control command only when the code word is received with the control command,

wherein, each mining shield control device comprises a switching element controlled by at least one of the central control system, a hand-operated input device, or a neighboring shield control device, which permits separating a phase conductor of the at least one bus line, the switching element being normally closed so as to allow signals to pass and being opened to effect a separation of the one bus line upon the occurrence of a failure.

2. (previously presented) The longwall support control of claim 1, wherein each mining shield control device comprises an amplifier for the control command signals that do not include a code word assigned to the respectively called up mining shield control device, and which are received via the at least one bus line.

3. (canceled)

4. (previously presented) The longwall support control of claim 1, wherein the mining shield control devices are programmed such that control command signals that are received via the one bus line, and which do not include a code word associated to a respectively called up mining shield control device, are retransmitted to the adjacent mining shield control device.

5. (previously presented) The longwall support control of claim 4, wherein each mining shield control device connects via a second parallel bus line to the central control system and to one another.

6. (previously presented) The longwall support control of claim 1 wherein the central control system comprises a primary and a secondary central control system connected at respective opposite ends of the one bus line so that the mining shield control devices are positioned between the primary and secondary control systems along the bus line.

7. (previously presented) The longwall support control of claim 6 wherein each mining shield control device includes a right and a left input element each connected to the one bus line and to the switching element, and wherein the input elements are programmed to check whether the received signal includes the corresponding code word and to process any control command signals.

8. (previously presented) The longwall support control of claim 7 wherein each mining shield control device further includes an amplifier connected to the bus line.

9. (previously presented) The longwall support control of claim 1 wherein said at least one bus line comprises two phase conductors.

10. (new) A longwall support control for controlling the movements of a plurality of longwall support units in the longwall of a mine, comprising:

a central control system, and

a separate mining shield control device locally and operationally associated to each longwall support unit, the mining shield control devices being connected to the central control system and serially connected to one another by means of at least one bus line, through which each of the mining shield control devices can be called up from the central control system or an adjacent mining shield control device for inputting a control command, and with each mining shield control device being programmed such that it is possible to deliver for execution to its associated longwall support unit control commands that are received via the one bus line, and with each mining shield control device storing a code word uniquely associated with the respectively called up mining shield control device, and with each mining shield control device being programmed to execute a control command only when the code word is received with the control command,

wherein, each mining shield control device comprises a switching element, which permits separating a phase conductor of the at least one bus line, the switching element being normally closed so as to allow signals to pass and being opened to effect a separation of the one bus line upon the occurrence of a failure, and wherein the central control system comprises a primary and a secondary central control system connected at respective opposite ends of the one bus line so that the mining shield control devices are positioned between the primary and secondary control systems along the bus line.

11. (new) The longwall support control of claim 10 wherein each mining shield control device includes a right and a left input element each connected to the one bus line and to the switching element, and wherein the input elements are programmed to check whether the received signal includes the corresponding code word and to process any control command signals.